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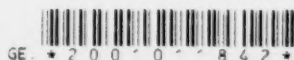
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Written statement*/ submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English and French from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).



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ENG

Violations of the rights of children in Indonesia

Tens of thousands of children have been forced to leave their homes in the Moluccas in Indonesia, some of them having to flee with their parents to remote parts of the country, because the Indonesian security forces have been unable to guarantee their safety in their own home area. For months members of Muslim militia have been carrying out raids on Christian villages aimed at driving the Christian population from the region. One example of many concerns a young boy from the village of Waay on the island of Ambon that has been attacked four times in 2000 by Muslim militiamen. At least 55 villagers have been killed in pogroms. Children have been forced to watch as their parents were killed. Schools, all businesses, over 90 per cent of private dwellings and the crops in the fields have all been destroyed. Not once have the Indonesian security forces taken action against the attackers. To date more than 500,000 Moluccans have fled the attacks on their homes. Thousands of Muslim children have also been forced to leave their homes in the face of escalating violence as their villages have suffered retaliatory attacks by Christians.

Countless schools have been destroyed. Those educational establishments that are left have been forced to remain closed for months because of the violence. For the most part there is no adequate educational provision in the refugee camps. The humanitarian situation of the refugee children is disastrous. The Indonesian authorities are ignoring the needs of the refugees and their efforts to secure the prompt return of the Moluccans to their home villages are inadequate.

The Society for Threatened Peoples International is appealing to the UN Commission on Human Rights to condemn the expulsion of tens of thousands of children in the Moluccas. The Indonesian government should also be urged to provide increased humanitarian assistance for the refugees and to secure their prompt return home. If the refugees are unable to return home there will be more ethnic conflict in Indonesia. Already the influx of refugees has led to increased tension between the different population groups in a number of areas.
